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## FEMALE PROFESSIONALS.

DISCUSSIONS respecting suitable employments for women have for the last few years caused much unpleasant excitement. Society is divided on the subject. Shall women study to be medical practitioners or not? Are they not entitled to compete fairly with men in such occupations as are consistent with their strength and abilities? Surely you are not going to treat them as inferior beings? These are the sort of questions that have been debated, and not always in a very placid humour. Having never interfered one way or other in this matter of dispute, we approach it in a perfectly impartial spirit, and desire to treat it not from any of the partisan views usually presented, but in the broad light of Nature—for to that every temporary and local interest must in a great degree eventually give way.

Let us go practically to the point, as that is better than any abstract reasoning. In a late number of our contemporary, *The Queen*, a London periodical partly devoted to illustrations of ladies' fashionable apparel, it is intimated that a wood-engraver of high standing had opened a class in London for instructing ladies in the art of wood-engraving. The announcement proceeds to say that wood-engraving is a lucrative art, in which partial training is valueless, and that the artist referred to being 'deeply interested in the extension of this work as an employment for women, does his utmost to impress upon all whom it may concern that no one can hope to succeed as a wood-engraver who is not willing to devote six hours a day for six years to learning the work. It has often been a matter of surprise to us that ladies did not study wood-engraving as a profession. If any novelty in dress or millinery is brought to us, and we desire to illustrate it in our pages, experience has taught us—and we only say this after repeated trials—that to Paris it must go to be both drawn and engraved. We have tried artists of fame, as well as unknown men, and always with the same result—utter failure. The figures may be more natural, and the faces better drawn perhaps, but

as illustrations of dress or bonnets the English engravings failed to convey any definite idea of them, and were practically useless. Now that the use of illustrations in the literature of the day is constantly on the increase, and the number of periodicals devoted to ladies' requirements, are legion; also now that catalogues issued by the leading London mercers of their latest novelties yearly become more complete, we marvel why ladies who have a talent for drawing do not attempt to bring it into the market, and acquire the French knack of drawing, even such trifling matters as bonnets, on wood. Delicacy of touch rather than strength of hand is required; the cost of the requisite tools is nominal; it is essentially a home occupation, cleanly in its nature, and free from any unpleasant accompaniments. Wood-engraving is certainly worth a trial to any ladies who have studied drawing, and like the occupation, but to succeed it should be taken up seriously, and not as a pastime.'

We should be exceedingly glad to learn that the artist mentioned was successful in finding a numerous class of young women, who having little or nothing to do, would patiently and intelligently 'devote six hours a day for six years' to acquiring a satisfactory proficiency in the art of drawing and cutting illustrations on wood. It is an elegant art, requiring taste and accuracy of observation. In London especially it is, as is stated, largely in request, and accordingly to the skilled who are ready with their services, can hardly fail to be fairly remunerative. Nor should we forget that it involves no more severe bodily labour than needlework, if so much, while it is ten times more interesting.

Unfortunately, there is a *per contra* in almost everything, and particularly as concerns the prosecution of industrial occupations by women—wood-engraving and doctoring included. We frankly own that in many employments women are qualified to come up to men in proficiency, if not to go beyond them. We see this in various departments. It is much more observable in France than in England, perhaps because the draining away of

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men for the army has long been much greater in France than in our own country. In Paris, as we have seen, the man struts about in uniform, while Madame, under the pressure of domestic necessity, paints pictures, keeps the shop, or in some other way employs herself to secure a living, and sends baby to nurse with the chance of never seeing it more either alive or dead. That may be called making the most of women as bread-winners.

In England, society has not got this length, and we hope it never will. The foundation of our polity, civil and religious, is the family system, and it is the natural and proper system, anything else being abhorrent to cherished feelings and convictions. The destiny of man has been indicated with a plainness not to be mistaken. 'Man goeth forth to his labour.' In the old texts we do not hear of women having, like the over-drugged shop-keeping females in Paris, to toil for the support of husband and family. Knowing, and in no respect objecting to his fate, a young man learns and sticks to his profession. There is his work before him. It is the thing by which he proposes to live, as well as to maintain those for whom he may incur a responsibility. He may in the progress of affairs enlarge and improve upon his original employment, but unless he be a downright ne'erdo-weel, or by good-luck falls into a fortune, he never entertains the idea of giving up work altogether as long as he is blessed with health and strength. The truth is, in most instances, work becomes so much a pleasure and a habit, as not to be readily relinquished, even when the pressure of necessity has passed away.

Such is the destiny of men according to the order of Nature. That of females is very different, or at least it is only modified by special and unavoidable circumstances. The young woman does not naturally look out for a trade which she will have to pursue for life. If she selects an employment to support herself, it is a kind of make-shift. It is something that may honourably provide for her wants in the meantime, or for a few years, as the case may be, but is not seriously viewed as a profession for life. The result is a degree of training and self-sacrifice inferior to that to which men feel obliged to devote themselves. Miss Nightingale has said that 'three-fourths of the mischief in women's lives arises from their excepting themselves from the rules of training considered needful for men.' Just so. Women might in many departments of labour be equal to, or outshine men, but they will not take the trouble. They are thinking about something else, as it is quite natural they should do.

Miss B. B. McLaren, a lady in Edinburgh, who has interested herself in the instruction of young women in wood-engraving as a pleasant and remunerative profession, does not speak very hopefully on the subject, in a small pamphlet which she has issued. Her words are worth quoting: 'In some of the novels of late years, in which a heroine is suddenly thrown on her own resources for maintenance, she at once becomes an engraver on wood, the profession being invariably acquired in the course of a year! Accuracy had to be sacrificed for the exigencies of the tale, and anything can be accomplished on paper; but in real life several years of daily work will pass before proficiency is acquired. This does not mean to say that a proficiency very pleasing to the amateur

may not be reached at a much earlier period, and pictures for admiring friends to praise grow under her hands; but the amateur standard and the professional one are widely apart. Partial training has been the ruin of many attempts to gain new employment for women. It is often spoken of as desirable that they should do "a little" work, but the "little" which is meant to apply to the matter of quantity, is easily transferred to that of quality, and this effectually bars the way to success. It is very undesirable to see a lowered standard for women's work, and yet what reason is there to expect the attainment of the higher one in any way but with the same amount of time and labour given by young men? No one asks for more. It is sometimes said that girls "take up things" more quickly than boys; but even where this is the case, the intuitive quickness of perception which rapidly obtains some knowledge of art, will not do away with the need for that time and experience which alone will give the power to practise it.'

In the education of women, according to this lady, there is usually a fatal want of 'thoroughness.' Things are learned superficially. This she laments; but from what we have already hinted at, it does not seem strange. The ordinary professions are not the vocation of women, and by no contrivance can we make them so, any more than we could make water run uphill. The hope of woman from the outset is some day to be married, and fall into the range of duties imposed on a wife and mother. Now, there is nothing wrong in aspirations of this kind. They are, on the contrary, to be commended, and at all events spring from moral and intellectual conditions which Nature has demonstrated from the earliest girlhood. Take, for example, the love of dolls. In every country in the world, dolls are the solace of female children. In the most savage nation, where the neatly manufactured doll, or *poupée*, as the French term it, was never seen, the little girl instinctively dresses up a piece of bone, and fondles it with an affection as ardent as that shewn by an English female child for a *poupée* of the most lifelike and costly description. What is this but an inherent idiosyncrasy in the female mind, obviously implanted for a beneficent purpose. The girl playing with her dolls is the incipient mother loving and nurturing her children.

So is it in tracing girls up to womanhood. In their education, their domestic training, their style of dressing, and love of personal adornment, are recognised the position they are destined or hope to assume. Acute and clever as they may be, they seldom fail to make themselves as attractive as possible. From youth to age, dress runs in their head. The largest mercantile concerns in the world are got up and maintained purely for decorating their person. We find no fault with this prevalent taste, unless when it degenerates into something grotesquely absurd, as it occasionally does under the impulse of fashion. Every woman is entitled to make the very best of herself, to insure if possible the admiration of those whose good-will she especially cares for. But all such, and often very costly efforts, as regards dress are significant of the fact, that professional labour lies not within the course of life appointed for women. Their rôle is in the region of the heart—the domestic circle—not within the hard lines

in which men find it incumbent on them to struggle for a subsistence.

Doubtless, through various exigences, large numbers of women betake themselves to professional employment of some kind. They become domestic servants, governesses, teachers, dress-makers, shop-assistants, and so on. While still young they work in factories. But we repeat that whatever they do in these several respects is done on the principle of a temporary make-shift; the predominant hope they indulge being that they will some day settle down as the happy and respected mother of a family. In this candid view of the matter it is hardly to be expected that women—taking them all in all—will ever make that resolutely persevering effort to attain the proficiency in a profession which is universally aimed at by men. To expect anything of the kind, is to hope for more than human nature can justify. In the notification which has been made respecting wood-engraving, it is specified that young ladies must make up their minds to study six hours a day for six years. Of the propriety of this obligation, we have no doubt. What concerns us to know is, how, besides paying fees, young ladies driven to the expedient are to live in the meanwhile, and how many will persist in giving six years of assiduous diligence in learning a profession which any day may be tossed aside on marriage, the paramount object in life, being happily achieved.

As far as we know, there are few or no instances of any regular trade being successfully appropriated entirely by women. Such, indeed, is not to be looked for, and, properly speaking, no blame ought to rest on females for essentially following a primarily assigned duty. We have known cases in which, from motives of benevolence, young women alone were invited to conduct a trading experiment, and they failed, not from want of skill, but want of perseverance. The members of the establishment broke away piecemeal, and went to other and more attractive pursuits. Where young men are employed along with young women in any commercial undertaking, there is less chance of disruption; and the reason why is so obvious as to need no particular explanation. No accusation can be made on this account. Celibacy is a violation of every instinct and sense of social obligation. It is often nobly submitted to as a duty by females, but the instinct is indestructible and to be respected.

When one reflects on the many reasons why young women are not, as a general rule, likely to give that close and lasting attention to any branch of scholarly or mechanical art qualifying them to excel, the vehement objections sometimes made to female professionals seem not a little ridiculous. We should like to see the subject treated in a more practical and sympathising spirit. A little consideration might shew that only in a few remarkable instances—such as that of Mrs Somerville—do women possess that resolute spirit of study which leads to eminence in scientific or other learned pursuits. The thing is not to be done off-hand, or by fits and starts, and half-formed resolutions. Look at the hard and tedious work that young men must undergo before attaining proficiency in the practice of medicine. Success with them, is a matter of life and death. No one can reasonably expect that any large number

of young ladies are ever likely to make similarly enduring efforts.

To us there is something melancholy in the exigent circumstances that often in this old country drive ladies to look for subsistence in pursuits not very accordant with the delicacy of their sex. The redundancy of unmarried young women should set people thinking on the causes for so much enforced celibacy. That is a broad department of inquiry somewhat strangely neglected. Neither emigration nor drafting for the army will account for the phenomenon. We have space here only to hint at one or two prevalent errors—or call them failings—in which society is intimately concerned as regards the number of female celibates.

Let us first point to the extravagant modes of living—extravagance in dress, extravagance in house-furnishing, extravagance in nearly everything—that has conspicuously gained ground among the middle classes within the past forty years, and in the face of which marriage has become a much more serious affair for men to encounter than it ought to be. There, plainly enough, lies the basis of innumerable mischiefs. For such a state of things, both sexes must bear the blame. Fathers of families are seen misexpending means, and leaving daughters unprovided for, but with tastes and habits which are incompatible with their position, the result being that they are reluctantly obliged to swell the already overswollen ranks of governesses. On the other hand, the lofty expectations erroneously entertained by many young women, drive away suitors who have still to make their way in the world. Hence, from various preventable causes, the vast numbers of young unmarried women crowding public places of resort.

Pondering on these social mistakes, who need feel surprised that women of an independent spirit should try to make their way as professionals. Applauding, we yet pity their meritorious endeavours. Only a few out of groups of aspirants are likely to be eminently successful; and we are prepared to learn, that as opportunity offers they will drop into the line of duty for which they were destined by the imprescriptible ordination of nature.

W. C.

## THE LAST OF THE HADDONS.

### CHAPTER VI.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

I DID the best I could in the way of adorning for dinner with some of my dear mother's old lace, and a cherry-coloured bow or two on my black silk dress, and flattered myself that I was presentable enough for a family party. But on entering the drawing-room, I was somewhat dismayed to find Lilian in full evening dress. To my unaccustomed eyes her elaborate toilet appeared more suited to a ball-room than for dinner, and my taste in this case served as well as knowledge, for I know now that it was too much for home-dress, according to the decrees of Society. I think she saw what was passing in my mind, for she apologised in her half-shy graceful way by asking me to excuse it. It was 'a fancy of papa's to see her so; and she liked to gratify his lightest fancies now.'

Mrs Tipper had also made more change than seemed necessary for home toilet; and did not look at home in her rich moire and too massive

jewellery, put on haphazard as it were: brooches stuck in upside down and on one side, as though it were enough for them to be there; rings, bracelets, &c. glittering with diamonds and other precious stones, not combined in the best taste.

But I soon had something to think of besides our toilets. Lilian whispered to me that 'he' had arrived; and when presently Mr Trafford entered the room and was introduced to me, my attention was concentrated upon him. Interested as I already was in Lilian Farrar, I was more than curious to see her lover. Moreover I was altogether inclined in his favour. No one could be more prepossessed in another's favour than was I in Arthur Trafford's; and yet I had been in his society barely half an hour before I was conscious of being not a little disappointed. Whether my expectations had been too exalted, or there was some graver cause for the disappointment, time would shew. I certainly had expected to find Lilian's lover and Mr Wentworth's friend very different from the fashionable-looking young man before me.

His bearing was that of a gentleman, and he was handsome—some might say very handsome. I would not allow even that much, in my disappointment, telling myself that his head wanted more breadth; that his features were too delicately chiselled for manly beauty; and that his hands were too small and soft and white. The very grace of his figure offended me, as indicating lack of power. What does the world want with graceful men, with hands incapable of grasping anything?

I had been prepared to like him for Lilian Farrar's sake; and already I was unpleasantly conscious that I might learn to dislike him for her sake. I tried to persuade myself that I was too hasty in my judgment—that his might be the type of manly beauty—the refined delicacy which in certain instances has accompanied a fine order of intellect. But no; Shelley had a different brow from that, and something very different looked out of Shelley's eyes.

While I was summing him up in this uncompromising way, I am bound to acknowledge that he was most courteously trying to make talk with me. Lilian had introduced us in her pretty graceful way, informing us that we were to become great friends; and he had taken the hint, making himself specially attentive and agreeable to me during dinner. He talked well, and appeared well read; and I must do him the justice also to say that his bearing towards Mrs Tipper was all that it should be, with no perceptible undercurrent of pride or satire. Above all, I must acknowledge that his love for Lilian was sincere; no woman could for a moment have doubted that; whatever its value in other respects, it was sincere. And yet I was perverse enough not to be satisfied with him. Why could I not take to him? I irritably asked myself, conscious that I had not sufficient grounds for my prejudice, and ashamed of feeling it. But there it was, and I could not overcome it.

Mr Farrar joined us in the drawing-room, which was lighted up as if for a large assembly, for an hour after dinner; and I, who had been accustomed to note certain signs and symptoms in an invalid, could see that the effort cost him a great deal. He was, however, not too weak to tell me the cost

of building and furnishing Fairview; that he had paid two hundred and fifty pounds for the grand piano; a guinea a yard for the curtains; that the carpet had been made to his special order, &c.; whilst Mrs Tipper was smiling amiably in her after-dinner nap, her fat little jewelled hands folded at her capacious waist; and Lilian and her lover were sauntering amongst the flowers in the moonlight outside.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, Mr Farrar told me there were to be all sorts of entertainments given at Fairview; dinner-parties, garden-fêtes, and so forth. Then he named two or three City magnates as his friends, and went more fully into the Trafford pedigree for my edification, dwelling enjoyably upon the idea of being father-in-law to a Trafford. 'The Warwick Traffords, you understand, Miss Haddon; it is very essential that should be remembered.' Going on to point out the great things which might be expected from such an alliance. 'With money as well as birth, Arthur Trafford would enter parliament and make some mark in the world.' All of which proved that he too had faith in the young man's capabilities. I know now that it was Arthur Trafford's evidently sincere admiration for things great which misled so many who knew him. Were he capable of doing the deeds he could admire, he would have been what he had the credit for being. When I heard him dilate with glowing eyes and heightened colour upon some heroic deed, I could understand how he had obtained an influence over a young imaginative girl. He not only made her believe him to be endowed with the qualities of a hero, but honestly believed it himself; persuaded that he only lacked opportunity to prove that he was made of very different material from that of ordinary men.

I listened to Mr Farrar politely, as I was bound to do, and not a little pitifully too. All this was what he had set his heart upon; and he would not live to have his ambition gratified, even had Arthur Trafford been all he was imagined to be. Had no one warned him? Did not the sight of his own pinched and drawn face warn him that he was already on the threshold of the other life? Had I been speculatively inclined just then, I might perhaps have carried on the thought which suggested itself to me. I will only say that I felt more respect for the etherealised body at that moment than for the earth-bound soul. I think now that Mr Farrar would not be warned of what was approaching, and contrived to deceive his child and those about him as he deceived himself respecting his real state.

There certainly was at present no foreshadowing of the coming separation, in his daughter's face. She was altogether free from care; and I was presently very glad to find that my first estimate of her had been so far correct; she was not the kind of girl to be selfish in her happiness; in small things she shewed herself to be considerate for others. Mr Farrar was presently wheeled away in his invalid chair, bidding me good-night with the information that he was just at the period of convalescence when rest and seclusion are essential; and as soon as his daughter found that I was left companionless in the drawing-room, she came in, her lover's protests, which were carried on to the very threshold, notwithstanding.

But I begged to be allowed to make acquaintance



with the garden; and went out into the moonlight, leaving the lovers at the piano together. It was the very best light in which to see the Fairview grounds where there were no trees higher than shrubs, and too much statuary, with vivid patches of colour, so fatiguing to the eye—masses of flowers without scent or leaves, arranged with mathematical precision, as though they had become strong-minded, and would only speak to you in problems. In fine, it was the newest fashion in gardening, which Mr Farrar prided himself upon keeping up at great expense. To my unaccustomed eye, it lacked the poetry of the old less formal styles. But it looked its best in the softening and subduing effect of moonlight; one got some hints of shadow, which was as lacking during most of the day as in the famous Elizabethan picture. In the light of day the silvan gods and goddesses looked specially uncomfortable, for want of a little foliage. One 'Startled Nymph,' placed at the corner of a gravel-walk, without so much as a shrub near her, appealed to one's sense of justice in the most pathetic way.

My best enjoyment, as time went on, was to go down (the grounds sloped down a side of the hill upon which the house was built) through the kitchen gardens, seat myself upon the low wall which bounded them, and turning my back upon the glories of Fairview, refresh my eyes by gazing upon the beautiful undulating country, stretching far into distance beyond. I never tired of gazing at the varied scene—pasture-lands, deep woods, ripening hop and wheat fields, pretty homesteads, an occasional glimpse of the winding river, and a primitive-looking little ivy-covered church. It was this little church that Lilian and I elected to attend, instead of going in state to the newly built edifice near Fairview, to which Mr Farrar had given large donations. There was one nest of a house, peeping out from its woody retreat, on the slope of a hill, rising from a small straggling village in a lonely valley, half a mile or so to the left of Fairview, which made a special appeal to my fancy. A long, low, old-fashioned house, with veranda and green terrace walk, I pictured to myself the lovely view as seen from that aspect; and what life might be with Philip in such a home—the rest and peace we two wanderers might find in such a haven as that. Had not I been a wanderer too? He was writing more and more hopefully of being able to return and settle in England in another year.

'Thank God, there will be no more need for money-grubbing, Mary. We can live with a few chosen friends and our books in some cottage-home free from care.' It was part of our arrangement to live simply as well as largely, our only ambition being to gather congenial friends about us. Ah, me—ah, Philip! what a glorious dream it was!

Lilian was very impatient to hear my praises of her lover—or to talk them; it did not much matter which—and that first evening instituted a custom to come to my room the last thing every night. 'If you do not mind, Miss Haddon?' in her sweet pleading way. Mind, indeed! It would be the very best way of finishing the day which she could invent, I told her; taking her face between my hands, and putting my lips to her brow.

'But—I fear you are engaged; you must not let me be selfish,' she murmured, glancing at my open desk.

I had commenced a letter to Philip, telling him of my change of abode, and doing my best to convey to him the impression that my engagement at Fairview was a less business one than it really was. I closed my blotting-book at once. Philip would get his letter quite as soon if I wrote later; and it was my fancy to write to him during the silent hours of the night.

She took a seat upon a stool at my feet, for that also was to be an institution, she laughingly observed; and commenced with a few words expressive of the hope that I should like Fairview; and then, in charming Lilian fashion, told me that "Dear Arthur" (you must let me call him that to you when we are alone, dear Miss Haddon) is delighted at my good fortune in having you. He sees, as we all do, how very different it might have been.

She seemed to think that nothing could be more gratifying than to find favour in 'Arthur's' sight. The possibility of his not finding favour in my sight, did not, I think, for one moment enter her thoughts. Fortunately, she took my admiration of him for granted. I should have found it difficult to satisfy her expectations upon the point. How pleasant it was to listen to her ideal talk of her lover—her vivid imagination investing him with all the grandest attributes of a hero; though it would have been even more pleasant, had I had no misgivings upon the point, or felt sure that she would never be disillusioned. As it was, the fear that she might some day be roughly awakened from her bright dream, and the knowledge of what such an awakening would cost her, caused me to listen rather gravely and abstractedly.

I was a little disturbed from another cause, not sufficiently appreciative of the wisdom which comes with years. Ah, me! how far apart that twelve years' difference between our ages seemed to set us! I was so sensitive upon the point, that it did not occur to me that the difference between our characters or temperaments might in some measure account for my reticence. I was not naturally so expansive in my manner as are many women. Though the thought of Philip would set my pulses throbbing and my cheeks aflame, I could no more have talked of my love to Lilian Farrar than I could have cried it aloud in the streets. The rhapsodies over a certain portrait—the kisses pressed upon the paper that his hands would touch—and sundry other vagaries committed after she had left me that night. Could she have seen it all, she would no longer have thought it necessary to apologise for talking so much love-talk to me. I was illogical enough to be wounded at her supposing it to be necessary to apologise; whilst I took no steps to shew her that no apology was needed. But the kisses and rhapsodies notwithstanding, the tone of the letter written that night to Philip was tinged with a *souppçon* of melancholy. It contained more than one reminder that he must not expect to find me exactly the same in appearance as the girl he had parted with eight years ago.

But I do not think mine is a morbid nature, apart from that one subject, and fortunately there were now too many demands upon me, and my time was too fully employed in the duties of my position, to leave leisure for unhealthy study of my feelings.

Mrs Tipper at once left everything in the way of management to me; only too glad to resign the

reins of government, which had been but loosely held, into my hands, and cease to have any recognised individuality in the household.

'My dear, the servants all know that I haven't been used to it, and I'm sure they are no way to blame for that; of course anybody could see, only they won't mind what I say.'

Moreover, I received a hint from headquarters that it would be considered part of my duty to keep the domestic machinery under my supervision, the housekeeper with the high wages notwithstanding. The management of a set of servants who had been accustomed to do pretty much as they pleased, except with respect to their master—he was as exacting and ready to take affront as his sister was lax and good-natured—was, I soon found, no easy task. Lilian was simply the pet of the house, as she had been ever since her return home; seeing nothing the servants did not choose her to see, and with no thought of evil—no suspicion that others might be less trustworthy and unselfish than herself. Warm-hearted, sympathetic, and lavish with her large allowance of pocket-money, she was ready to give wherever she was told help was needed, and was made acquainted with all the requirements of the servants and their relations. Grandmothers, mothers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles—numberless needy people were made known to her, and all found sympathy and help. The servants at Fairview had good cause for their fealty to their young mistress.

I was too often obliged to look upon the reverse of the picture. Many a trait of human nature, of which it is painful to be cognisant, and still more painful to be the censor of, came under my notice, and for a time my position was a not very enviable one, the servants resenting what I suppose appeared to them as undue interference. But as time passed on, they learned to distinguish between my blame and their master's. They found that I blamed neither from pleasure nor anger, but simply because it was part of my business, which it gave me no little pain to be obliged to do.

Then they could not say that they found me either proud or ashamed of my position. Little half-speeches and innuendoes, with which I was first assailed, to the effect that 'People who took wages had no right to set themselves up above other people who did the same,' were met by the frank acknowledgment that they certainly had not a right. 'I was ready to take the blame for any undue assumption of superiority they might convict me of, whilst trying to do the work I was paid to do.' So at length we came to understand each other better; difficulties became fewer, and my work was less a task.

One step which I took, and which I quite believed would cause me to lose ground in the estimation of the servants, had quite a contrary effect to what I expected. I was very soon able, with dear old Mrs Tipper's ready sanction, to give Becky a step in life. An under-housemaid was required, and I contrived to win Mrs Sowler's consent for Becky to come to Fairview. As I laid no restrictions whatever upon Becky in the matter, I thought it quite possible that certain facts concerning my poverty, and consequent rather hard life, whilst at Mrs Sowler's, might become known amongst the servants at Fairview.

But I did not do Becky justice. As thoughtful and considerate for me as she was true, nothing

relating to the past escaped her. Although she was at first awed and overwhelmed by the gorgeousness of her new home, and was, when alone with me, very frank in expressing her astonishment at the ease and readiness with which I accepted it all, I found that she said no word down-stairs about my past troubles. She only displayed her surprise at my philosophy and delight at her own good fortune, when we were safely shut in alone together.

'Ain't it lovely, when you have been used to things so different, Miss? Here's me sitting down to dinner every day like a lady born! No call to snatch bits off the plates as they come down now! And instead of washing and doing my hair in the back-scullery, there's a beautiful bedroom of my own to go to. Mrs Sowler wouldn't believe! And I've got you to thank for it all! Just see if I won't try. They shan't say you have recommended a girl as can't work; though Sophy says it isn't genteel to tear at it as I do.'

Becky's gratitude to me was even deeper and more enduring than I had expected to find it, and her love—I must have been very different from myself, to deserve such love as Becky's; though I knew that it did her no harm to indulge it.

Lilian who, from my description of past hardships, took great interest in her, and was extremely kind to her, did not, as I took it for granted she would, share with me in Becky's love. Nay, I verily believe that in her allegiance to me, poor Becky was jealous of a rival power. I could not get her to be enthusiastic about even Lilian's beauty. Becky always insisted that it was the pretty dresses which made her look more attractive than I did; and tried to persuade me to endeavour to outvie her. Her staunch friendship did me not a little good. It was especially cheering to me just then to find that I could keep love as well as win it without using any unlawful means.

#### DECEPTIVE ADVERTISEMENTS.

LATTERLY, the newspapers have brought to light a variety of curious instances of credulous people being imposed on by deceptive advertisements. Human weakness appears to be specially preyed upon by medical pretenders. The practice of medicine without proper qualifications being illegal, the pretender takes care to avoid marked publicity, and works at a distance by way of advertisement.

We may give one or two instances. The illegal practitioner announces his power of curing an ailment by being furnished with a letter describing the symptoms. To this the ailing one receives a gushing reply, written upon showy paper, with embossed address, monogram, crest, and everything calculated to deceive the prey around which the empiric is about to wind his toils, not to be unwound until the uttermost farthing shall have been paid. The patient is informed that his symptoms indicate an unusually deranged state of health, which will necessitate the preparation of special medicines, and for a supply of which a fixed sum is to be immediately forwarded; the writer's conviction being expressed that this one supply will produce all the effect that could be desired; though, should it not, the case must be an obstinate one, and the patient is urged not to lose a day in renewing the supply, and again renewing that, if need be. There are not wanting instances in which these

nefarious compounds (of which an average supply lasts about six weeks) have been imbibed several times a day for nine or ten months, the credulity of the consumer evaporating at that stage. And here we may mention that our statements have not had their origin in speculation, certain victims being of our own acquaintance. It is not our province to determine whether or not the trifling ailments referred to are the premonitory symptoms of the more serious maladies turned to advantage by the quack. Apart from our own knowledge on the subject, it is to be presumed that the exaggerated statements rest on some foundation; but we have no hesitation in pronouncing the vast majority of these advertisers to be nothing more than medical highwaymen, and wish that it were in our power by these lines to banish them for ever from the scenes of their abominable extortions and infamous exploits. Almost all of them are amenable to the law even in its present state, as is proved by the late successful prosecution of large batches in Lancashire, one of whom engaged to restore to health his detective-patient in a couple of weeks for the modest sum of forty pounds. But in general their security is undisturbed, and their unlawful operations carried on openly.

Not long since, we encountered an advertisement which purported to emanate from a gentleman who had suffered from polypus in the nose for many years; who had been treated by various medical men without any benefit, but who, after prolonged and intense suffering, obtained permanent relief, having discovered means by which every person so afflicted might *cure himself*, and which, actuated by feelings of humanity, he desired to make known. For this information—this means of self-cure—there was required nothing save a stamped directed envelope. Having our own ideas respecting such an advertisement, we applied for the recipe, though not nasally afflicted; and received in reply a printed letter, directing application to be made to another person possessed of an extremely high-sounding name, who, Number One declared, had been the instrument under Providence, &c. On application to Number Two we obtained—a pamphlet, with the usual exhortations to lose not a moment in forwarding a sum considerably in excess of a sovereign! At the present time there are quite a number of such advertisements to be seen; some of them are even published in the falsely assumed names of clergymen, who are prompted by feelings of humanity, &c., and contain disclaimers of any connection with quacks or quackery of any kind.

The advertisements of those private parties who profess to be systematic *money-lenders* are of two kinds—the one from those who do lend; and the other from those who do not. The former are almost universally deceptive; the latter, of course unquestionably fraudulent. The advertisements of those who do lend, addressed to certain specified classes, almost without exception contain assertions which the borrower will find abundant reason to doubt ere the loan is completed. On application the needy unfortunate will be puzzled to reconcile the terms named to him with those in the alluring advertisement, and will find the rate of interest to be truly 'six per cent. and upwards,' fifty per cent. being no uncommon demand, in addition to expenses incident to and deducted

from the loan, and which, the applicant is usually informed, are necessitated by the existence of some special risk in his particular case.

To those who pretend to lend, but who do *not*, we shall now proceed to devote a little more attention. They are seldom found associated as a company; but for reasons of their own, most of them prefer to sail under amalgamated colours. Their advertisements are always more alluring than those of the usurers whose occupation they counterfeit. Those who require temporary confidential accommodation are informed that they can obtain the same by application to A. B. C. & Co., without the inconvenience of inquiries or sureties, on security of furniture, &c., or on personal security—at a small extra-risk-premium. Distance no object. Or occasionally it is varied by the falsehood that no preliminary fees or office expenses of any kind are charged. But when this stage of the transaction has been reached, the dupe always learns that these payments are dispensed with only in the cases of certain classes, to none of which, it is scarcely necessary to add, he is fortunate enough to belong.

The profits of those who do not lend are derived solely from booking fees, office expenses, and charges for the sham inquiry, which always, of course, is of so unsatisfactory a nature that the 'loan' cannot be granted.

We were recently informed by a casual acquaintance, that some time ago, when in reduced circumstances, occasioned by various losses, he resolved to obtain a loan of forty pounds, and for that purpose made his way to the office indicated in a very attractive advertisement. He found the advertiser occupying, as offices, two apartments in a dingy building used by various persons in a similar capacity. A single clerk represented the entire staff in the outer office. Within was an old oily-looking individual, whose get-up was quite in keeping with the wretched surroundings. His red face beamed with apparent pleasure as he beckoned his impecunious visitor to a chair. After having stated that he could give the security of his furniture (value for many times the amount he required), replied to a number of queries, and paid over two shillings and sixpence, the applicant was handed a form, to be taken home, filled up, and returned to the office, when the application would be considered. On suggesting that he should fill the form just then, urging his anxiety to obtain the loan as soon as possible, he was informed that, if received the following morning, it would be quite time enough, as the principal himself (just then absent) must first consider it.

The form contained a number of questions, one incorrect answer to which, a note informed the applicant, would invalidate the entire transaction. Another note furnished a scale of inquiry fees, in pursuance of which he inclosed with the form an ill-afforded seventeen shillings and sixpence. The receipt of this was acknowledged, and his suspense began. After about a fortnight of anxiety, during which he had several interviews with the aforesaid clerk (the principal being always absent), and had parted with an additional five shillings in payment of the legal document incident to the loan, the applicant received by post the gratifying intelligence that, as the result of the inquiries had proved unsatisfactory, Mr P. Q. regretted to have to inform



him that the negotiations must be considered at an end. No further explanation was given; but the disappointed applicant resolved to obtain more explicit information. He called at the office, and learned from the clerk, who at first feigned ignorance of his person, that Mr X. Y. the man of business had just gone out. 'Was the principal in or at home?' brought the response: 'Neither: he is expected back this evening.' Another visit had a similar result; but while requesting to know the time of their return, he observed the clerk reach for a ruler which, rolling along the desk from him, fell heavily on the floor; and the visitor remembered with suspicion that a similar accident had occurred on the occasion of his previous visit. Having informed the scribe of his determination to see the principal or his manager, Mr O. took his departure. Next day he called again. Mr X. Y. was in, but engaged, and likely to be so for a considerable time. The clerk was again sufficiently awkward to let the ruler fall. The visitor, despite the endeavours of the clerk to dissuade him, persisted in remaining. After a while, the clerk, with a remark to the effect that he would mention Mr O.'s presence, knocked at the inner door, opened it, and vanished through. Presently he returned, apologising. The manager was alone. The gentleman who was with him must have passed out while the unobservant clerk was writing or calculating, or both. Just then Mr X. Y. himself appeared, expressing his regret, firstly in relation to the clerk's mistake; secondly, regarding the falling through of the negotiations, consequent on the receipt of a certain letter. In reply to Mr O.'s request to be permitted to see the letter, or even to be informed who was the writer of the unsatisfactory tidings, he was told that such would be a flagrant breach of faith with the correspondent, and so contrary to the practice of the profession, that Mr X. Y. could not possibly take upon himself to do so in the absence of the principal. As the conversation progressed blandness disappeared, the manager's red face assumed a redder aspect; and the visit was terminated by Mr O. being ordered out of the office—a command with which, under the circumstances, he could do nothing but comply.

This is the case as we remember having been told it; and our informant stated that, from further inquiries, he had no doubt the object of this advertiser was other than the lending of the needful. Few men, especially those who appear in comfortable circumstances, care to trumpet their poverty to the world; and this alone, we believe, prevented Mr O. from instituting proceedings against the swindling sham-manager and his accomplice.

Another class of deceptive advertisements are those offering remunerative employment to all persons without hinderance to present business, &c. We write of the class, and do not affirm that there are no exceptions. Generally the sum stated to be *very easily earned* is a tempting one to the class of people for whom it is intended. They send half-a-dozen or a dozen stamps, as requested, receive a reply, and then forward six or ten or sometimes twenty shillings in the nature of security, obtaining in return some articles of insignificant value for sale on commission. We have been informed that on one occasion the articles so sent were a few pencil-cases and trifles of like nature, by selling

which, our informant stated, a very persevering man *might* realise one-fifth the income mentioned in the advertisement.

It is not often that the person defrauded finds himself amusingly hoaxed in addition; in this position, however, was the person who, reading an advertisement of a certain means of earning thirty shillings a day, which any one sending three stamps would be put in possession of, remitted them, and obtained the advice: 'Sell a ton of sugar a day at five per cent.'

We have seen that quacks, sham-usurers, &c. owing to the nature of their transactions, are generally safe from legal proceedings by any of their victims, who naturally are averse to appear before their friends and the public in such matters.

Some will suggest that the laws should be so amended as to punish severely persons guilty of the varieties of imposition we mention. We have no objection to such a remedy being sought for; but the best of all preservatives against flagrant attempts at imposition, is the exercise of a little shrewd common-sense, and, in time of need, an application to a legitimate quarter.

#### A JOURNEY IN TURKESTAN.

A good deal has been heard lately about Turkey and Turkestan. Leaving Turkey in the meanwhile to the newspapers, which have sad work in dealing with it, we wish to say a few words about Turkestan, a country that was taken possession of by Russia a few years ago. In the first place, where is Turkestan? It is a tract of country in Asia, lying on the east of the Caspian Sea, and having Persia and Afghanistan on the south. On the north, is that inland sheet of water known as the Sea of Aral, into which runs the river Oxus or Amu Daria. Near the left bank of this river, which drains Turkestan, is situated Khiva, the capital of the country. We should have heard little of this obscure Asiatic region but for the possibility of the Russians some day pushing their conquests onward through Afghanistan to India. On that we offer no opinion. The character of Turkestan has been materially cleared up by the work of Mr Eugene Schuyler, concerning whose travels we propose to say something.

Mr Schuyler started on his long journey in March 1873, travelling for some way in company with Mr McGahan, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who a few months later, by reason of his interesting account of his desert ride to Khiva, awoke to find himself famous. Travelling on the smooth snow-roads with their tarantasses well packed with provisions, and strapped on to sledges, they struck across the Volga, through Orenburg to Uralsk, the capital of the Cossack settlement. Two or three native servants and an interpreter were added to the little party, which at first advanced by means of sledges, these being replaced by the luxurious tarantass—a carriage so built that the occupant can lie at length—when they suddenly passed from bitter winter into an oriental midsummer.

As the travellers steadily pursue their long way,



the reader finds himself looking at an endless variety of dissolving views, all changing and shifting with the picturesque rapidity of kaleidoscope patterns. He sees in succession glimpses of the Aral Sea, great barren stretches of desert steppe, at first white with snow, and further on black, and then red, and afterwards more desolate than ever—the only human beings on it being wandering families of Kirghiz, going with their cattle, flocks, and kibitkas (tents), to seek pasturage south of Orenburg. The Kirghiz are a race of Turkish origin, speaking one of the purest Tartar dialects. They solicited Russian protection in the time of Peter the Great. They are Mohammedans, and possess as usual many wives, from whom they exact one very curious mark of respect. The women are not allowed to mention the name of any of their male relatives in conversation; and in illustration of the occasional inconvenience attendant on this custom, our author relates the following amusing anecdote: 'A Kirghiz woman wanted to say that a wolf had stolen a sheep and taken it to the reedy shore of the lake. Unfortunately, the men of the family bore names corresponding to most of these words, and she was obliged to gasp out "that in the rustling beyond the wet a growler gnaws one of our woollies." This story shews that the Kirghiz are named after natural objects and animals, in the same way as in European nations.

Following the travellers along the river Syr Darya, and past the groves of dark-green trees marking the site of Turkestan, we see them at Tashkent, a flourishing quiet little town, where there is quite a colony of Russian officials and their families. Here is the palace of the governor-general, which stands in an immense garden, beautifully laid out; in summer every one migrates to the gardens outside the town, where they live in Kirghiz kibitkas, which are very spacious and comfortable. The native part of the town is interesting from the variety and unevenness of the buildings.

Tashkent was captured in October 1864 by General Tcherniaeff, who seems to have behaved exceedingly well, and to have won golden opinions from the people. Mr Schuyler was several times in this town, and gives a very interesting account of native Mussulman life and customs. He shews us their occupations and amusements, and their civil and religious ceremonies. He takes us through the quaint bazaar, which forms such a characteristic part of every Asiatic town, and introduces us to the tea-houses, and various shops of the jewellers, sword-blade, and saddle and harness makers, dye, cosmetic and soap vendors, porcelain and pottery makers, &c. Whole streets are devoted to separate trades, such as tanning and shoemaking; and long rows of booths are filled with cotton and silk goods, the best of which latter come from Bukhara and Khokand. The entire care of the rearing of silkworms and winding the silk is intrusted to the women—it being an occupation considered derogatory to the dignity of the men—and the methods

employed are so rude, that the yield of silk is far less than it would be if managed by Europeans; but faulty as is the system pursued, the silk manufacture is of great importance to the country, and is more developed than other branches of industry.

Leaving Tashkent behind them, the little caravan slowly advances towards Samarkand, crossing the Golodnayo or 'Famished Steppe,' which is a desolate waste, containing but a few wells of brackish water. Samarkand appears to be a beautiful city, possessing magnificent ruins, many mosques, and of course a bazaar, and is backed by dazzling snow-peaks. Of all central Asiatic towns, Samarkand is the most surrounded by old-world romances and traditions of bygone splendour. It was conquered by Alexander the Great, and afterwards by the Arabs. As the writer places before us in succession the beautiful medressés of Hodja Akhrar and of Shir Dar, with their partially remaining delicate facing of blue and white tile-work, vast ruins, and mighty domes; mosques, with their towers and minarets, and famous tombs (amongst them that of Timur), we seem to be looking at a wonderful city of the far past transplanted from the pages of the *Arabian Nights*. The city was finally captured by General Kaufmann, and taken under Russian protection in 1866.

Again the travellers advance; and we have shifting views of mountain and valley to Urgut, beyond which the peaks of the Zarafshan Range rise to from twelve to eighteen thousand feet high. The next halt across the mountains and steppes is Hodjent, from whence Mr Schuyler decided to take a journey to Khokand with a retired Russian officer, who was also going; and on June 9th they started, stopping first at Makralm, the frontier fortress of Khokand, and then continuing their way through cultivated country and pretty villages till they reached Khokand, which is modern, and has wider and more commodious streets than most Asiatic towns. Its population numbers about seventy-five thousand, and one of its chief characteristics is a large paper manufactory, where nearly all the paper used in Central Asia is made. The rule of the khan throughout Khokand is arbitrary and tyrannous; executions are very frequent, and are constantly accompanied by the most frightful tortures. After overcoming very considerable difficulties, and after much time had been wasted in the exchange of presents, compliments, and tiresome ceremonials, the travellers succeeded in obtaining an interview with the khan, to whom they had letters to deliver from the authorities at Tashkent.

The almond-shaped valley of the Khokand, about one hundred and sixty miles long and sixty-five broad, is an exceedingly fertile district; and owing to the excellence of the soil and the climate, the agriculture is in a highly flourishing condition, and its mountains abound in minerals. But in spite of so many natural advantages, Khokand has been the scene of constant rebellions, owing to the cruel tyranny and shameful exactions of the Khan Khudayar and of the Beks, to whom are intrusted, with absolute power, the various towns and provinces. Of all the Asiatic races the Khokandians seem to be the most fancifully superstitious, the simplest actions, movements, and affections, such as sneezing, coughing, whistling, drinking, &c., having a good or evil significance. A buzzing in one's ears means a death, and a prayer

is repeated, connected with which fancy the writer gives the following legend: 'In heaven there is a tree, on each leaf of which is written the name of some soul; and what men call a buzzing in their ears is the rustling of one of these leaves as it falls from the tree. If the noise be a ringing as of bells, then it is a Christian soul whose leaf has fallen, and who is to die; and so for each faith the noise is different.' There is scarcely an occurrence of their daily life which is not similarly bound up with some poetical and fanciful story.

From Khokand our author proceeded to Bukhara, through a country that gave signs of an older and more perfect civilisation; and throughout Bukhara the treatment he met with from the inhabitants was very polite and obliging. The journey lay through a mountainous district; and wherever he staid on the road, he was welcomed with kind hospitality, if with rigid etiquette, by the various Beks. The hardships of the journey from Karshi to Bukhara were great—a bare sandy desert, great heat, very little and very bad water. On the road, the Amir Mozaffir Eddin passed with a guard of about eight thousand men, on his way to Shahrisabz, his usual summer residence. Having a letter to deliver to him from General Abramof, Mr Schuyler succeeded after some difficulty in obtaining an interview with him in person. The Amir, who is detested by his subjects, was polite although very curt, and gave his permission for the party to proceed to Bukhara, with the gracious injunction to pass the time pleasantly and to travel as his guest. The slave-trade, although supposed by the Russians to be utterly a thing of the past, was still carried on here, Mr Schuyler having been present at the sale of several Persian men and boys. He himself bought a boy, meaning to take him to Russia and then send him back to Astrabad, to his friends; but the boy was stolen from him on the day of his purchase by order of the Bukharan authorities. Determined to outwit them in his turn, he secretly purchased another boy; and this second rather dangerous acquisition was successfully taken to St Petersburg. On the return of the army from Khiva, General Kaufmann concluded a treaty with the Amir, which has put an end to the slavery in Bukhara for ever.

From thence the writer returned to Tashkent, then diverged to Aulié-Ata, on the rapid river Talas, which town was taken by storm by General Kaufmann in June 1864, that being the commencement of the campaign of that year, and which resulted in the Russian conquest of nearly the whole of Central Asia.

The subsequent journey through Kuldja was one of painful interest, as in many parts it led through scenes of ruin and devastation, caused by the late insurrection. On every side were dried-up canals, untilled fields, burned forests, and dismantled and ruined cities. From Suidun were visited the ruins of Illi, the former capital of the province, the road traversing a country that had once been highly cultivated, but was now a desolate waste; the town itself was almost entirely destroyed, the ground being everywhere strewn with fallen houses, remains of all sorts, broken pottery, human bones, skulls, and even entire skeletons. During the Chinese rule this province was extremely fertile, and in an altogether flourish-

ing state; but since, it has been utterly crippled by the internal insurrections and wars waged against it by Yakub Khan, chief of the small Uzbek principality, who has given a great deal of trouble both with Kuldja and Kashgar, and who is at present making war on China. The Russian occupation of Kuldja is supposed to be only temporary, as its restoration to China has been promised as soon as a sufficient Chinese army is sent to enforce and maintain order; and indeed Mr Schuyler considers that the only way of successfully increasing the prosperity and productiveness of Kuldja, Kashgar, Khokand, Bukhara, and Russian Turkestan, will be found to be by introducing the patient and economical industry of the Chinese.

According to the statistical computations made by the writer, the expenses entailed on the Russian government by the conquest of Central Asia are enormous, being greatly augmented as they are by the reckless extravagance, and gross mismanagement and maladministration of the various officials in power, who are almost entirely exempt from the supervision of their government. The cost of the army is immense, and enormous sums have been all but wasted in attempting to build a fleet on the shallow Aral Sea, and to navigate the Amu and the Syr Darya to any great distance.

Once Central Asia was thought to be a very rich country, that would bring in large and increasing revenues to the government; but this has been found to be very far indeed from the case; and in the writer's opinion, could the Russian government but have known fifteen years ago as much about the interior of Asia as is known now, they would probably have hesitated long before making any movement in that direction. On the whole, and in spite of the great corruption of the troops, officers, and the authorities, and the local misgovernment, which exert a very bad and serious influence on the natives, Russian rule may be considered to have been beneficially exercised, and to have certainly relieved the different states in a great measure from the cruel despotisms of the Khans and Beks. Great good has also been effected, and facilities for trading much increased, by the improved communications and good roads that have everywhere resulted from the Muscovite occupation. In the matter of education little or nothing has been attempted. Mr Schuyler seems to consider that England has no need to fear Russian designs on India, and that in advancing she wishes only to round off the Asiatic boundaries of her dominions by China on the east, and Persia and Afghanistan on the south-west. The only danger to India from Russia, our author thinks, lies through Persia, as the nature of the country in Afghanistan is such as would render the transit of a large army extremely difficult if not impossible. In his opinion, it would be more dignified as well as wiser if England, instead of protesting and threatening at every new advance of the Russians, and then doing nothing, were to give the Russian government plainly to understand what limits they must not pass in their onward movement.

A chapter at the end of the book is devoted entirely to the Khivan campaign and its consequences; but as this is of a purely political nature, we decline to discuss it. Our impression is that the people of England have little cause to trouble themselves about Turkestan. We need only add that Mr Schuyler's work is one of the

most interesting accounts of Central Asia that has ever been written, comprising as it does a history of a country hitherto but little known to the civilised world.

READY-MONEY.

'So you are going to be married, Kate? Well, I hope you have made a wise choice.'

'O yes, uncle,' I replied lightly; 'I know I have. Henry is to make me perfectly happy.'

'What has he got?' was the next pleasant observation that fell from Uncle Jocelyn's lips.

'Got? uncle! I don't know what you mean,' I answered, growing rosy red at the unexpected inquiry.

'What are his means? What does he intend to settle upon you?'

'He has his business,' promptly interrupted my mother.

'And he is so clever, he is sure to get on,' I added, in my eagerness to assure Uncle Jocelyn it was all right as regarded my future.

'That will depend a great deal upon you, Kate,' he replied gravely. 'The wife has more to do in making or marring her husband than is generally suspected. A careless, extravagant, bad wife is the greatest curse a man can have; a good one is the greatest blessing.'

'Yes, uncle; O yes,' I assented, glancing towards my mother, who was smiling somewhat scornfully, I fancied, at his opinions.

'Take care of his pence and his pounds will take care of themselves,' continued uncle; 'and beware of ever getting into debt, Kate; it's the easiest thing to get into and the hardest thing to get out of. Take my advice; live well within your means, and always pay ready-money.'

'Yes, uncle; O yes,' I responded. 'I am sure you are right; and Henry is so prudent, he is certain to have the same ideas.'

'Well, keep them before your own mind. Don't despise an old man's counsel: buy nothing that you can't afford; and always pay ready-money.'

I remember that conversation so well with Uncle Jocelyn, some few weeks before my marriage; at the time it did not strike me so forcibly as afterwards, for my mind was too filled with other and to me more interesting matters.

Uncle Jocelyn was an old man, and the amount of his fortune had always been wrapped in some obscurity; but he lived comfortably, and possessed a small property in Berkshire, upon which he had built a pretty and substantial house, where I had often spent many happy days. He had always shewn a special affection for me, no doubt owing to the fact of my being the daughter of his only brother, who had died when I was quite an infant, leaving me to the sole guardianship of my mother. Unfortunately for me, there had never been any love lost between the latter and Uncle Jocelyn; the coolness had rather increased than diminished as years went by; and when invitations were sent for us to visit Conington, which was the name of my uncle's place, my mother invariably refused for herself, and only with great persuasion permitted me to go.

How I enjoyed these visits! How sweet were the hay-fields and clover-scented meadows! How cool and fresh the marble-slabbed dairy, with its rows

of brimming basins of frothy golden cream! How fragrant was the old-fashioned garden, with its long grassy walks and great big dewy roses, and the old cedar-tree so shady, under which Uncle Jocelyn would sit of an afternoon smoking, listening apparently quite satisfied with my childish conversation! The sun always seemed to be shining in those days. I can recall no gloom then, and things all wore a charm, which I did not know lay chiefly in the fact of my own youth and utter ignorance of life and its cares.

However, not to digress, I had not seen so much of Uncle Jocelyn since I had grown up, partly on account of my mother's unabated dislike to him, partly because of the existence of a new interest in life. I had met Henry Arden. He was six-and-twenty, five years my senior. His position in life was a fairly good one, he having a small interest in a first-rate City business which gave him over three hundred a year; his character was irreproachable; and when I say that he was a general favourite wherever he went, it may be surmised that in my opinion he was, if not quite perfect, very closely akin to it. For myself I was passable—perhaps a little more than that; but I was penniless until my mother died; so it was a very astonishing thing to me how so desirable a *parti* had fallen to my lot. He was certain to get on; the senior partners had been known to say so themselves. Consequently our start in life promised to be a fair one. And to be brief, we were married. Our honeymoon was of comparatively short duration, but it was long enough to cost Henry, as I afterwards learned, something like forty pounds, which was a considerable cut out of three hundred a year; for it had not occurred to him to lay by any spare cash for those unavoidable expenses. I had felt rather uneasy at the expenditure; but it was too early days to venture on any remonstrance, had I been so inclined; we were sure to live very quietly when we once settled down, and could easily then make up for any little extravagance of which at the outset we had been guilty. We were to live in London, and we were fully agreed on one point—lodgings were not to be thought of, we must have a house of our own. The prospect of possessing one jointly with Henry was very pleasant to me. I pictured an endless fund of amusement and occupation too, in furnishing and adorning it; but the mansion had still to be selected; so our first business was to find one to suit us, the next to get into it as soon as possible.

We must have spent a small fortune in cab-hire before we finally found just what we wanted; even then, though the situation was good and the domicile desirable, the rent rather frightened us: it was eighty guineas a year unfurnished; but we should be so comfortable in it. The smallness of its size—and it was extremely small—was rather an advantage than otherwise, as it would require so little furniture; and two maids would be amply sufficient for our establishment, which in such a place would be a most creditable *ménage*.

We were delighted with the house, the balcony to the drawing-room being, as we enthusiastically agreed, almost worth the rent itself; and we made no resistance when the house-agent, who must have had some amusement over our innocence and inexperience, fixed us for a seven years' lease, representing to us that our advantages were almost



unequalled, having no premium to pay. We consented—in consideration of all he enumerated in favour of our bargain—to make any repairs that were necessary; and in fact were in such delight with the whole affair that the agreement, as might have been expected, was very easily arrived at.

We knew nothing about furnishing; never dreamt of the dangers of green wood or the inevitable result of cheap investments; thinking ourselves very acute to get hold of two furnishing lists to compare prices; beside which we sat down with paper and pencil to calculate exactly how much we must spend; and I, remembering Uncle Jocelyn's advice, ventured to say we should resolve not to go beyond it. We came to the conclusion that actual necessities might be bought, taking the prices from the books, for one hundred and fifty pounds; so Henry decided on borrowing two hundred, with which we felt sure the house could be really nicely done; and this sum he was to pay interest for until the principal itself was paid off.

Nothing could have surpassed our prudence—before we set out. When we got into the shop we had selected as the one to patronise, we found that the things we had thought of were very inferior to our imaginings; a trifle more here and a trifle there could make no great difference in the sum-total, and be everything to us in the niceness and prettiness of our house; besides which our estimate of necessities proved a very inadequate one, when innumerable *etceteras* were declared absolutely indispensable by the attendant shopkeeper. We made apparently endless purchases, which we could hardly remember until they were deposited in Amberley Villas, where, with my newly engaged domestics, I awaited them with immense delight.

But vast as the importation appeared, I had yet to learn of the legion wants undreamt of by us. Scarcely a day passed without some new demand being made, which apparently it was perfectly impossible to do without. But at last I was thoroughly satisfied with our possessions, and the servants seemed to have come to the end of their requirements; so the only thing that we had to think of was the bill, which had not yet been sent in to us. I was frightened to think about it; but Henry was quite prepared for its being considerably over the two hundred pounds. Judge of our dismay when we did receive it to find it more than twice that sum—four hundred and fifty-six pounds odd! There were frightful entries for 'Time,' which in themselves represented a serious item, and upon which we had never calculated; and our small sundries, which we had hardly taken at all into account, came to something quite appalling.

But the first shock over, the offending document was thrust aside—it would be paid all in good time; and for the present we both resolved to dismiss it from our minds. Friends were rapidly gathering round us; we must receive and pay visits; so it was not very difficult to banish disagreeables, and to enter with the greatest enjoyment into the new life which lay before us. I had fancied our house was very complete and perfect until I saw some of the elegant drawing-rooms belonging to my new acquaintances; after that, many deficiencies were plainly visible; and in order to supply them, we went to different shops,

making various purchases, which as usual, were put down to our account. Then came our first entertainment with its attendant expenses, which it was absolutely impossible to avoid; for in Henry's position it was, as we thought, most necessary for us to maintain a good appearance; and as his wife, it was also incumbent upon me to dress as well and fashionably as I could.

So things went on; and before we had been married two years I need hardly say we were hopelessly and horribly in debt. To retrench seemed utterly impossible. I hardly knew where the extravagance lay; but the fact remained, we were living far beyond our income; our bills were never ending, and every day we were sinking deeper and deeper into the mire. To add to our difficulties, a nursery had been established, and though one might imagine so small an addition was not a serious one, it cost us no trifling sum. I could not have endured to see my baby badly dressed. How could I have seen it go out except in the sweetest and freshest of garments? So it was duly adorned in the whitest and prettiest things, which insured a most satisfactory amount of patronage for our laundress, and most appalling bills for me. However, we managed to keep afloat in some wonderful manner; but Henry was beginning to have a strangely careworn look, to which I could not blind myself. He was worried and harassed. His business was all right; but there were bills to be met, difficulties to be disposed of which he could not quite see the end of.

To outward appearance, however, we seemed a very prosperous pair. Our house was now as elegant as our neighbours'. I had a thousand costly little trifles lying about in the drawing-room, got from time to time, and as usual not paid for; some of which the shopkeepers themselves had pressed me into purchasing. Sometimes a sharp pang shot through me when I thought over our position, and I wished when we first set up that I had had sufficient sense to persuade Henry to do so more in accordance with our income than we had done; but it was too late now; we must trust to some good fortune turning up. Henry had hopes that his partners meant to promote him; and if they were realised, we should be much better off. This idea was buoying us both up, and we were feeling particularly sanguine when Mr Trevor, the senior partner, a peculiar man, who never almost left his own house in Bedford Square, except for the office, announced his intention of coming to Amberley Villas to dine, if we would have him. In our anxiety to impress him favourably, we launched out into further expenses. He must be handsomely entertained, so much might depend upon his visit. Accordingly, I arranged a most *recherché* little dinner, and had the table laid out *à la Russe* to my entire satisfaction; when everything was completed, surveying the preparations with the utmost confidence in Mr Trevor's verdict. But alas! for Henry's hopes and for my dinner. Mr Trevor came, partook very sparingly and silently of our hospitality, and departed without having dropped one syllable on the subject which we were so hoping he would discuss.

Some ten days afterwards, the advance in the business was bestowed upon one of Henry's juniors who had never dreamt of getting it. We were terribly disappointed, having counted so surely

upon an addition to our means; and when our wrathful feelings were at their height, who should suddenly walk in but Uncle Jocelyn! He had never been in our house since we were married. It was in fact a great event for him to leave Conington, but the freak had seized him. He wanted to see his old favourite and his new grand-niece, so he had come. He only meant to stay for the day; in the evening he intended to return home. In my inmost heart I was as fond of him as ever; but his visit was ill-timed. I could not rally from my disappointment for Henry, and our cares were now assuming too serious an aspect to be easily set aside.

'You have a beautiful little house, Kate,' he said. 'I had no notion Henry was such a rich man.'

'Hadn't you, uncle?' I said, trying to laugh unconstrainedly.

'I am truly pleased to see you so comfortable,' continued Uncle Jocelyn kindly. 'This room must have cost you a pretty penny, Kate; and I daresay you have a nest-egg somewhere as well.'

'Oh, it isn't very much,' I answered, really referring to the room, but as he thought to the nest-egg; and imagining I meant that the latter, though of small proportions, did exist, he responded most cordially:

'Doesn't matter how small, Kate; there's plenty of time to make it larger.'

It was no use undeceiving him, though at that very moment an ominous envelope was delivered to me with the announcement that the person who brought it was waiting for an answer; to which I returned the usual formula, that Mr Arden was out, but would call in a day or two. I tried to look as indifferent as possible; but I felt Uncle Jocelyn's eyes were upon me, and my face coloured painfully, nor did my confusion escape the kind scrutiny. I felt thoroughly convinced he had drawn his own conclusions. Soon afterwards, lunch was announced, and we descended to the dining-room, where Sophy my parlour-maid had, to my horror, arranged some of our best china on the table, with the best intentions I knew, meaning to impress my visitor with our grandeur, but little imagining the real effect such superfluities would have upon my uncle. He noticed it directly, and admired it very much.

'Where did you get that figure?' he asked, indicating a lovely china centre-piece.

'I am not quite certain,' I replied carelessly; 'we have had it for some time.'

'Was it very expensive?' pursued Uncle Jocelyn.

'O no; not very: at least I didn't think so,' I answered, recollecting with a painful throb that it certainly had not cost us much as yet, considering we had not paid for it.

I need not give all the details of Uncle Jocelyn's visit; suffice it to say that it was one long martyrdom that afternoon to me; and it was a positive relief when his kind old face vanished, and I found myself alone once more. He had gone away no doubt thinking our lines were in very pleasant places, feeling assured not only of our prosperity but of our happiness. Poor deceived Uncle Jocelyn! He little knew that I was just longing to throw myself into his arms and make a clean breast of all our extravagance and consequent troubles. How I envied him going back to quiet peaceful Conington! How I

wished Henry and I were just one half as happy as he was!

However, our struggle then was just beginning, for we sank deeper and deeper. It was like a quicksand—the more we struggled the deeper we got. We dared not openly retrench—we lacked the moral courage; and our private attempts were the merest drops in the ocean of that mighty sea into which we had drifted, simply and solely because we had at the outset ignored the golden rule, so impressed upon me by Uncle Jocelyn, to live within our means, and to pay ready-money. And what had all our extravagance done for us? We had a large visiting-list, and I periodically paid a host of visits, always hoping to find my friends from home. We had a pretty house, and were able to entertain as elegantly as our neighbours. I had heaps of fashionable dresses and useless finery; and Henry was as perfect as ever in my eyes; but we were both miserable; debt stared us in the face whichever way we turned; and how long we could keep our creditors at bay was beginning to be a source of considerable anxiety to us.

Henry's position in his business depended solely upon the pleasure of the senior partners. There were curious conditions in their agreement with him; and if they heard of his embarrassments, no doubt it would injure him greatly, and might make them consider themselves justified in perhaps something far more serious than a remonstrance. O that we had acted differently! that the past could be lived over again with our present experience!

Once or twice I thought of confiding our woes to my mother; but I dared not; intuitively I knew that although in her prosperity Henry was a great favourite with her, she would regard him very differently if misfortunes came; and I felt I could bear anything rather than hear him blamed, especially as in my inmost heart I knew I was equally, if not actually more to blame than he was; for now I saw clearly how true it was what Uncle Jocelyn said, that a wife can make or mar her husband. If I had quietly set to work at the outset, and advised him aright, all would have been well; but now every day brought some hateful dun or threatening letter. A ring at the bell would cause me to start; and the sound of a man's voice in the hall parleying with Sophy, was enough to make me tremble all over.

'The crash could not be staved off for long; a crisis must shortly come.' So said Henry one lovely June evening, when we were sitting disconsolately discussing all manner of wild impossible schemes. It was an exquisite night; the heat of the day was over; not a breath of wind stirred the delicate blossoms of the plants which adorned our balcony, and the moon was rising in all her liquid loveliness, casting a clear cool light over the scene. Everything looked calm and quiet and peaceful; the pulses of the great city were hushed; there was nothing to break the silence, except poor Henry's hopeless tones repeating, 'A crisis can't be far off, Kate. What we are to do, I know not!'

We fancied the amazement of our friends—the nine days' wonder our misfortunes would cause, little dreaming that our ending had long been confidently predicted by them, and that our hospitality had been roundly censured and condemned by the very partakers of it. Still less did we imagine that Mr Trevor, so far from being

favourably impressed with our surroundings, had gone away—fully aware as he was with the exact amount of Henry's income—shocked and sorry to see that Henry Arden had married a wife with so little sense and judgment; and no second glance from his keen eyes was wanting to prove to him how terribly beyond it we were living. His observations had satisfied him that serious embarrassments must ensue; consequently he and his partners had bestowed the desired post and increased emoluments upon one who, if he needed it less than we did, certainly understood its value better.

So no one except my mother and Uncle Jocelyn would be surprised, though we imagined so differently, as we sat on and on in our pretty drawing-room talking over the weary subject and pondering what we could possibly do. We should have to sell off everything, to leave Amberley Villas, and to begin life over again. Henry's prospects of course would be seriously damaged, and we could never hope to thoroughly regain the position our own folly had deprived us of. It was not pleasant to think of; but there could be no shuffling out of the question now; it must be met and answered immediately: What were we to do? Nothing very definite could be arrived at; but one thing was quite clear—the change could not be far off.

I can never describe the anxiety of the days that followed, nor tell the agony it cost me to write and tell my mother that we were hopelessly, desperately involved, and that our difficulties were so great, it was impossible for us ever to surmount them. What would she say? What would everybody say? Worst of all, what would Uncle Jocelyn say? For the worst had come to the worst—our house was our own no longer; a man—strange and to me most terrible—was comfortably making himself at home in our kitchen—in other words, had taken possession! How could Henry shew his face at the office! How could I ever venture out again!

I shall never forget the two days that followed after I wrote and told my mother; on the third, when I was almost stupefied with the magnitude of our misfortunes, and during Henry's (poor Henry certainly had the hardest part to bear, for he could not stay quietly at home) absence had shut myself up in my room, some one knocked at the door, and in answer to my very subdued 'Come in,' it was gently opened, and not Sophy, as I had anticipated, appeared, but the familiar friendly face of Uncle Jocelyn.

'My poor child!' he exclaimed—'my little Kate!'—and he folded me in his arms with all the tenderness of a father. 'I only heard of it all this morning,' he said, 'and I started off immediately. Cheer up, Kate; don't grieve your old uncle by tears. Things can't be past mending; and I wouldn't be here if I hadn't come to help you.'

And how he helped us! Without a word of anger or reproach, he listened to Henry's and my story; we told it truthfully, not sparing or attempting to justify ourselves for our culpable conduct; and when all was confessed, he simply wrote a cheque for the full amount of our liabilities. The total was a serious one; but we were saved not only from the disgrace but from Henry's dismissal from a partnership which afterwards was the means of our possessing a fortune far beyond what we had ever in our rosiest imaginings dreamed of.

By Uncle Jocelyn's advice we sublet Amberley Villas, and retired to a more roomy house in a less expensive and less fashionable locality; we sold all our superfluities, which had become actually hateful to me, and we started once more with a small but certain income.

How much happier we were, and how grateful to Uncle Jocelyn, it would require a far more eloquent pen than mine to describe. He often came to see us, and never had cause to regret the generous help he had so readily extended to us in our great need, for he saw how thoroughly repentant we were. My mother joined in the general rejoicing over our regained happiness; and out of gratitude, her old prejudice against Uncle Jocelyn faded and faded away.

She often goes to Conington now, where we all meet, a merry party, of which the generous old man is the well-beloved centre. He was giving me some gentle hints as to the training of my sons the other day. 'For it's a mother's influence that tells upon the man, Kate; it's the lesson she teaches in childhood that he remembers best.'

'Yes, Uncle Jocelyn,' I answered; 'I know you are right. I hope amongst the many things I desire to teach them, one especially mayn't be forgotten—you know what that is?'

'To fear God,' replied Uncle Jocelyn reverently. 'That first of all,' I answered; 'but I meant something else.'

'What?' queried Uncle Jocelyn.

'Never to buy what they can't afford, and always to pay ready-money.'

[Here ends a true story, which it would be well if young folks about to marry would lay to heart. Commencing married life with the best intentions to be frugal—to 'creep before they gang'—how often do we hear of troublous times for the young pair who ought to know nought but happiness. With a heedless disregard to future consequences, they but too frequently establish an appearance as showy as their richer neighbours, launching (perhaps unwittingly) into extravagance that may cost them years of misery to redeem. Though in the case above narrated a young couple were saved from ruin by the intervention of a relative, such convenient folks are not always at one's elbow; and even if they were, should be left out of consideration. A thousand times better to begin 'house-keeping' with a show modest in proportion to means; to furnish if need be, gradually; and from time to time add what can be reasonably afforded. Then indeed the husband will secure not only the respect of his employer, but his own; and his young and happy partner need not give herself much uneasiness about what it will cost to clothe baby.]

#### ON SOME ODD FISHES.

A VERY singular little group of fishes is that known to the naturalist by the name *Lophobranchii*; this term meaning literally 'tuft-gilled.' Included in this division are two curious families, of one of which the Sea-horses or *Hippocampi* are the representatives; whilst to the other family belong their allies, the Pipe-fishes. No more interesting forms than these two groups can well be selected from the great class of which they are little known members. And the interest with which they are



regarded by zoologists extends beyond the mere investigation of their outside form or appearance; since they present, in many points of their economy and habits, very marked deviations from what one may call the ordinary run of fish-life.

To visitors to the great aquaria which are now springing up in every part of the country, the Sea-horses will be familiar. Their hardy nature together with their curious appearance have marked them out as aquarium favourites; and they may fairly, in respect of their zoological fame, divide the honours with any of their companion-tenants. Imagine a little body from four to six inches in length, topped by a head which in outline exactly resembles that of a horse, and tapering off below or behind into a lithe, flexible, and pointed tail, and we may form a rough idea of the general appearance of one of the Sea-horses. This little body we shall find to be covered with plates or scales of hard horny or bony material, exhibiting ridges and angles all over its surface. A pair of large brilliant eyes, each of which may be moved independently of the other, add to the curious appearance of the head; whilst to the body itself, may be attached long streamers of sea-weed, serving to conceal the little beings as they nestle amid their marine bowers, each looking like some veritable creation mythological.

The flexible tail which terminates the body has the important office of mooring or attaching the fishes to any fixed object. As we see them in the aquarium, they are generally poised, on the tail, as it were; the latter being coiled around a bit of sea-weed, whilst the erect body and head look warily through the waters of their miniature sea. And when they detach themselves, they swim about in the erect position by means of the two pectoral or breast fins, which being placed close to the sides of the neck, project like veritable ears, and assist in rendering the equine appearance of the head of still more realistic nature. These fins move with a quick twittering motion, and propel their possessor swiftly through the water; whilst the back-fin, placed towards the hinder extremity of the body, also assists them in swimming.

Some curious points in the internal structure of the Sea-horses warrant a brief notice. As every one knows, the red gills of an ordinary fish are shaped each like a comb, the teeth of the comb being represented by the delicate processes, each consisting in reality of a network of blood-vessels, in which the blood is exposed to the oxygen of the water, and is thus purified. In the Sea-horses, however, the gills do not present this comb-like appearance, but exist in the form of separated tufts or bunches of delicate filaments, which spring from the gill-supports or arches. From this peculiarity, the name 'tuft-gilled,' already alluded to, is derived, and the Pipe-fishes agree in the structure of the gills with the Sea-horses. Then, also, as most readers are aware, the gills of ordinary fishes are covered by a horny plate, appropriately named the gill-cover, and it is by sharply compressing the gills with this cover, that the water used in breathing is ejected from the gills, so as to make room for a fresh supply. In the Sea-horses, however, the gill-cover is not open or free at its under and hinder edges, but is firmly attached all round to the neighbouring tissues,

and so rendered immovable. But at one point in its circumference, a small aperture is left, through which the breathing water escapes from the gills.

The Sea-horses are found abundantly in the English Channel, around the coasts of France and Spain, in the Mediterranean Sea, and in the tropical oceans. A goodly number of different species are known to zoologists, but they all resemble one another in the essential features just noted. They are intelligent lively little creatures, learning in time to know the hand that feeds them. Fixed by their tails, they may be seen actively to dart the head at any passing object adapted for food. Whilst, when they wish to free their bodies from the attached position, they appear to manœuvre with the chin and head in order to effect their purpose. Their food appears to consist of small crustaceans, worms, and others of their marine neighbours, and they are known to be especially fond of such delicate tit-bits as are afforded by the eggs of other fishes.

Perhaps the most curious part of the history of the Sea-horses relates to their care of the young. Fishes generally take little or no care of their offspring, and it is therefore the more surprising to encounter in the little beings before us, a singular example of parental fidelity and attachment. Nor, as might be expected, is it the mother-fish who is charged with the task of attending the young. Contrary to the general rule, the male fish assumes the part of nurse, and well and faithfully does he appear to discharge his duties. At the root of the tail in the male Sea-horses, a curious little pouch is seen. In this pouch the eggs laid by the females—which do not possess a pouch—are deposited, and are therein duly hatched. Nor does the parental duty end here; for after the young are hatched and swim about by themselves, they seek refuge in the pouch during the early or infantile period of their life whenever danger threatens them. This procedure forcibly reminds one of the analogous habits of the kangaroos and their young; but the occurrence is the more remarkable in the lower and presumably less intelligent fish.

Some experiments made on Sea-horses seem to demonstrate the existence of a more than ordinary degree of attachment to their young. Thus when a parent-fish was taken out of the water, the young escaped from the pouch; but on the parent being held over the side of the boat, the young at once swam towards him, and re-entered the pouch without hesitation. Some authorities have not hesitated to express an opinion that the young are nourished within the pocket by some fluid or secretion from the pouch itself. But further observation is certainly necessary before this latter opinion can be relied upon.

The Pipe-fishes are very near neighbours of the Sea-horses, and derive their name from the thin elongated shape of their bodies, together with the fact that the jaws are prolonged to form a long pipe-like snout, at the extremity of which the mouth opens. These fishes are very lively in all their movements, and dart through the water so quickly that in many cases the eye is unable to follow them. Like the Sea-horses, the male Pipe-fishes protect and tend their progeny, and exhibit an equal attachment to their young.

These latter features are also well exemplified by the familiar Sticklebacks of our ponds and

streams. The latter fishes actually build nests for the reception and care of their eggs, the nests being made chiefly or solely by the males; whilst on the latter, during the process of hatching and in the upbringing of the young, devolves the chief care of protecting and looking after the welfare of the progeny. These instances of the care and duties which devolve on the males, instead of on the mother-parents, appear to reverse the more natural order, which almost universally obtains in the case of both lower and higher animals.

Of the oddities which fish-life presents, probably none are more remarkable than those of the Archer or Shooting Fishes, which inhabit the seas of Japan and of the Eastern Archipelago. When kept in confinement, these fishes may be seen to shoot drops of water from their elongated jaws at flies and other insects which attract their attention, and to strike their prey with unerring aim at distances of three or four feet. Another notable species of Shooting-fishes is the *Chaetodon*. This latter form possesses a prominent beak or muzzle, consisting of the elongated jaws; and from this beak, as from the barrel of a rifle, the fish shoots its watery missiles at the insects which alight on the vegetation that fringes its native waters.

The old saying which compares great helplessness to the state of 'a fish out of water,' does not always find a corroborative re-echo in natural history science. As every one knows, different fishes exhibit very varying degrees of tenacity of life when removed from their native element. Thus a herring dies almost immediately on being taken out of water; whilst, on the other hand, the slippery eels will bear removal from their habitat for twenty-four hours or longer; and we have known of Blennies—such as the Shanny (*Blennius pholis*)—surviving a long journey of some forty-eight hours' duration, when packed amid some damp sea-weed in a box.

But certain fishes are known, not merely to live when taken out of water, but actually of themselves, and as part of their life and habits, to voluntarily leave the water, and disport themselves on land. Of such abnormal fishes, the most famous is the Climbing Perch or *Anabas scandens* of India, which inhabits the Ganges, and is also found in Asiatic ponds and lakes. These fishes may be seen to leave the water, and to make their way overland, supporting themselves in their jerking gait by means of their strong spiny fins. They appear to migrate from one pool to another in search of 'pastures new,' especially in the dry season, and when the water of their habitats becomes shallow.

The Hindu names applied to these fishes mean 'climbers of trees;' and although statements have been made both by travellers and natives, that the Climbing Perch has been found scaling the stems of trees, these accounts, we fear, must be regarded as of equal value with the native belief that the fishes fall in showers on the land 'from the skies!' Of the power of the fishes to live for five or six days out of water, however, no doubt can be entertained; and their ability to support life under these unwonted conditions, is explained by the fact that certain bones of the head are curiously contorted so as to form a labyrinth, amid the delicate recesses of which a supply of water is retained, for the purpose of keeping the gills moist.

The curious *Lepidosirens* or Mudfishes, which occur in the Gambia of Africa and the Amazon of South America, exhibit a greater peculiarity of structure which still more completely fits them for living out of water. In the great majority of fishes, a curious sac or bag known as the *swimming or air bladder* is found. The use of this structure in ordinary fishes is to alter the specific gravity of the animals; and, by the compression or expansion of the air or gases it contains, to enable them to sink or rise in the water at will. In the Mudfishes, however, the air-bladder becomes divided externally into two sacs, whilst internally each division exhibits a cellular structure resembling that seen in the lungs of higher animals. Then also, this elaborate air-bladder communicates with the mouth and throat by a tube, which corresponds to a windpipe. The nostrils of the Mudfishes further open backwards into the mouth; whilst in all other fishes, except in one genus, the nostrils are simple, closed, pocket-like cavities. And it may lastly be noted that the *Lepidosirens* are provided with true gills, like their ordinary and more commonplace neighbours.

These remarks serve to explain the 'reason why' these fishes can exist for months out of water. Thus, on the approach of the hot season, the Mudfishes leave their watery homes, and wriggle into the soft mud of their rivers. Here they burrow out a kind of nest, coiling head and tail together; and as the mud dries and hardens, the fishes remain in this temporary tomb, breathing throughout the warm season like true land-dwellers, by means of the lung-like air-bladder. When the wet season once more returns, the fishes are aroused from their semi-torpid state by the early rains moistening the surrounding clay; and when the pools and rivers once more attain their wonted depth, the *Lepidosirens* emerge from their nests, seek the water, breathe by means of their gills, and otherwise lead a true aquatic existence.

With such a combination of the characters of land and water animals, it is little to be wondered at that the true position of the Mudfishes in the zoological scale should have formed a subject for much discussion. They appear, however, to be true fishes, and not amphibians, and they therefore may legally occupy a prominent position among the oddities of their class.

Other curious beings included among the fishes are the so-called Globe-fishes (*Diodon*, &c.), which derive their name from their power of distending their bodies with air at will; and their bodies being usually provided with spines, they may be judged to present a rather formidable front to any ordinary adversary, in their expanded condition. Then also we have the curious Trigger-fishes (*Balistes*), so named from the prominent pointed spine in front of the first of the back-fins; this spine firmly holding its erect position until the second spine or fin-ray be depressed, when the first spine is released by mechanism resembling that of the trigger of a gun. The obvious use of such an apparatus is clearly of a defensive kind; and it is remarkable to find a familiar mechanical appliance of man so accurately reproduced in the fish—or rather, *vice versa*.

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